



CASA

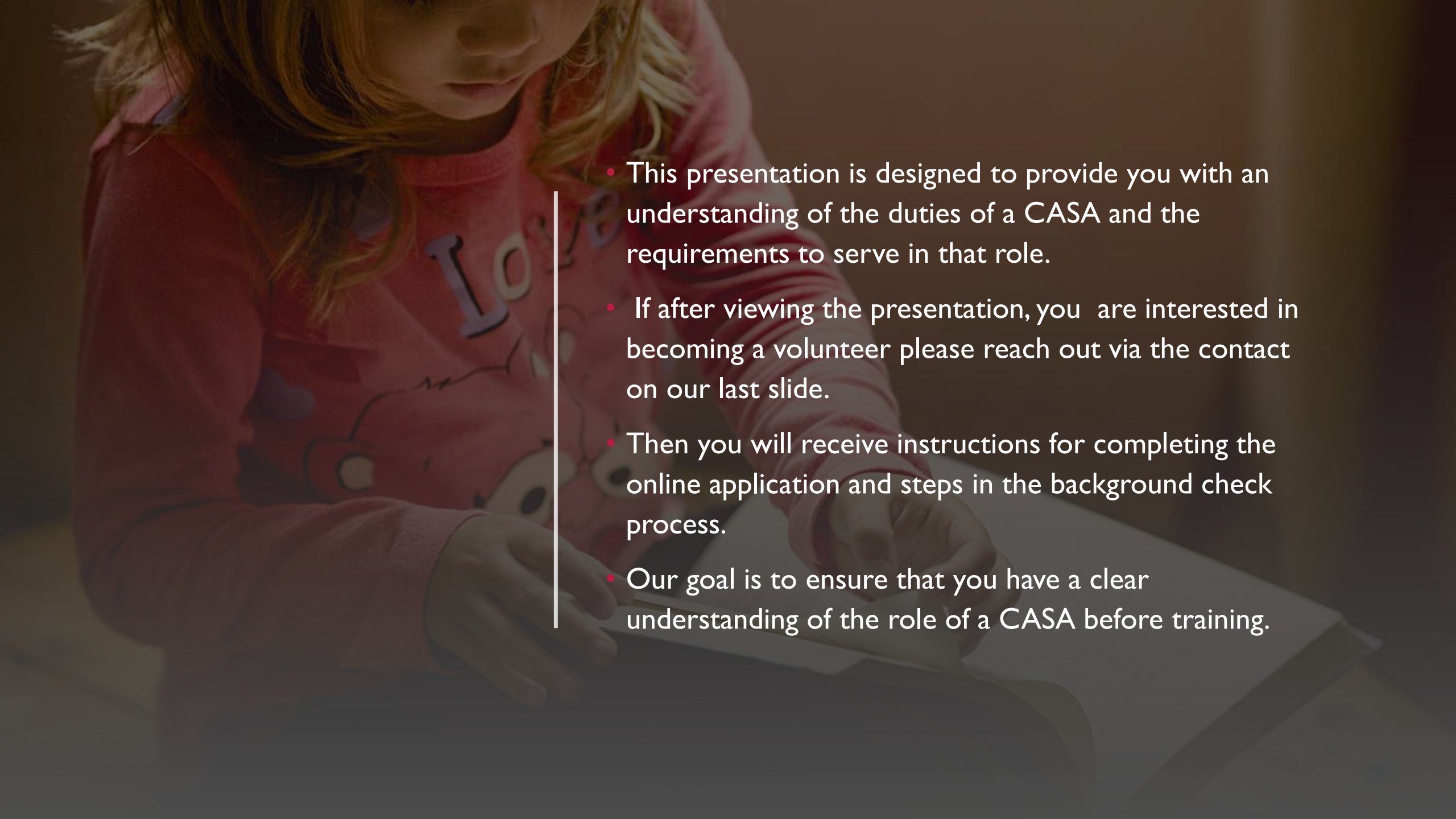
Court Appointed Special Advocates

FOR CHILDREN

MERCER

BURLINGTON

**THANKS FOR
INQUIRING
ABOUT CASA**

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- This presentation is designed to provide you with an understanding of the duties of a CASA and the requirements to serve in that role.
 - If after viewing the presentation, you are interested in becoming a volunteer please reach out via the contact on our last slide.
 - Then you will receive instructions for completing the online application and steps in the background check process.
 - Our goal is to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the role of a CASA before training.

WHAT IS A CASA?

“Court Appointed Special Advocate”

- A community volunteer assigned by a judge via a court order to assist the judge with a child abuse and neglect case.
- Gives the child a one on one advocate who stays with the case for at least one year.
- Provides the judge with detailed, updated, unbiased information based on the child's best interests.



MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to:

- Train and supervise community volunteers, appointed by the Family Court, to advocate for the best interests of children who have been removed from their families due to abuse and/or neglect.
- Our dedicated volunteers strive to ensure the emotional, physical and educational well-being of these children while they reside in foster homes or residential facilities.
- The ultimate goal of our volunteers is to help establish a safe, stable, and permanent home for each child we serve.





ROLE OF CASA VOLUNTEERS

A court order gives the volunteer **DIRECT access to all of the child's information to:**

- Collect information (directly from teachers, physicians, counselors...)
- Identify, locate and coordinate services
- Monitor services ordered by the court

ROLE OF CASA VOLUNTEERS

- Visit with the child at least once per month
- When possible, attend meetings to advocate for the child (School, Department of Children and Families, etc.)
- Submit written reports of findings and recommendations to the court (with assistance from CASA staff)
- Attend court hearings

WHY IS CASA SO IMPORTANT?

Picture yourself as a young child, taken from the only family you have ever known for reasons you may not understand. How would you feel? What would you need most?

What is needed is a reassuring adult who has volunteered to always fight for your best interests and for your return to a safe and permanent home; someone who understands the issues and can help you navigate the court system. This is the role that our volunteers play in the lives of these children at this critical and difficult time.



HOW EFFECTIVE IS CASA

Children with a CASA:

- Spend 25% less time in out-of-home placement
- Are more likely to succeed in school and have lower rates of delinquency
- Are less likely to re-enter the foster care system
- Are more likely to be connected to appropriate services and receive more services



EACH CASA IS ASSIGNED AN ADVOCATE SUPERVISOR

- CASA staff that supports the advocates
- Available by phone, email or in person to discuss the case, offer additional perspectives and explore alternatives
- Act as a sounding board for ideas or frustrations
- Review and edit your court reports



CASA VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

- No prior training or experience required
- Daytime flexibility to make private calls & attend quarterly court hearings – court hearings will always be in the county where you were sworn in
- 21 years of age
- Driver's license & car
- Basic computer skills
- Travel may be required - some foster homes are out of county



GETTING STARTED

Contact us to start the process:

1. Sign up for an interview
2. Complete online application including 4 references
3. Virtual Interview – about 1 hour
4. CASA completes background checks
5. Complete 30 hours of training plus a 3-hour court observation

CONTACT US

For more information on how you can become involved with CASA, please reach out to us:

E-mail: Mauri Tyler, mtyler@casamercer.org

Website: casamb.org (check out our 5-minute video)

Phone: (609) 434-0050

